

CONSERVATION Showcase

Beginning Rancher Achieves in Bootheel

Sometimes it is hard to decide what approach to take when writing a conservation success story. That it true for the Kansas Massey story. Should it be about how her success is “All in the Family” or “Conservation Fits Ranching Operation Like a Hand in a Glove?” In Massey’s case both approaches are true.

Kansas Massey, along with her husband Cash, is running a Black Angus operation in the Bootheel of New Mexico. Her family has ranched in the area for six generations, and, like her father, Jay Peterson, she is serving as a supervisor on the Hidalgo Soil and Water Conservation District board.

What is equally interesting are the conservation factors that have made Kansas’ and Cash’s operation so successful.

“When we bought this place it had one windmill,” said Kansas. “Today it has nine miles of pipeline and rotational grazing utilized over the ranch. We couldn’t have done anything if it hadn’t been for EQIP.”

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) enables beginning farmers and ranchers, like the Masseys, to make conservation improvements with an advantageous cost-share rate. The Masseys were able to install pipelines, fences, and troughs with the program without which they could not have launched the operation they manage today, according to Kansas.

The cross-fencing they installed to set up rotational grazing enabled them to break up their herd of



Left to right: Dennis Alexander, NM NRCS state conservationist; Arlen Lancaster, NRCS chief; Kansas Massey, beginning rancher

registered Angus for select breeding. This has fostered the development of their registered Angus that they run in addition to their commercial herd. As a consequence, this spring they will be offering their eighth annual yearling production bull sale.

The Massey’s are not letting their conservation improvements and success rest there. According to Kansas, their plans for the future include brush control management. This follows in her father’s footsteps for Peterson initiated conservation measures on his spread which is next door – including brush management.

For more information about the Environmental Quality Incentives Program administered by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service go to www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov